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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 001286

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2017  
TAGS: [ES](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR: POLICE CAPTURE JULY 5 POLICE ASSASSIN  
REF: 2006 SAN SALVADOR 1736

Classified By: Ambassador Charles L. Glazer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Jose Mario Belloso Castillo, the sniper identified in press photographs as the assassin of riot police (PNC/UMO) during July 5, 2006 disturbances at the National University (UES), was apprehended by police early July 2 after an all-night dragnet that led through the city's storm sewers. Former FMLN Mejicanos City Councilman Belloso, the subject of a year-long manhunt, surrendered without a struggle after he emerged from the sewers and was recognized by a passing policeman. He has promised to cooperate with investigators and provide detailed information regarding the events of July 5 if police will ensure the safety of his family members. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Police began to receive tips around midday July 1 of unusual activity around Belloso's mother's home, in the San Ramon area of the greater San Salvador municipality of Mejicanos; family members entering and leaving the house seemed unusually nervous and alert, and lookouts had been posted nearby. Armed with a search warrant, police began to surround the area in early afternoon, and on entering the house discovered the entrance to a tunnel whereby Belloso had fled. Sealing off avenues of escape, police pursued Belloso throughout the night. Belloso exited the storm sewer in a ravine in the San Luis area, and at 6:40 a.m. July 2 was recognized and arrested by a rookie police officer on patrol. (Note: Belloso's accomplice Luis Antonio Herrador Funes, who was captured soon after the 2006 killings, was sentenced May 30 to 23 years in prison for his role in the shootings. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) In Belloso's home, police found weapons, ammunition, and red kerchiefs emblazoned with hammer and sickle, such as those used by July 5 rioters. More importantly, police seized Belloso's computer and a number of documents; a careful analysis of these materials has already begun. With Belloso now in custody, leaders of all parties except the FMLN have called for a thorough investigation to identify those responsible for last year's violence. For their part, the FMLN leadership generally declined comment; their sole official statement characterized Belloso's capture as having been orchestrated by the government to maximize impact of the killings' one-year anniversary and to discredit the FMLN.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Belloso has stated that in exchange for protection of his family members (who were arrested for possession of illegal weapons), he will provide information outlining the intellectual authors of last year's assassinations, which were clearly premediated and carefully planned (see reftel). The exact nature of the relationship between the FMLN and the nation's most radical and violent fringe groups, including the Salvadoran Revolutionary Student Brigade (BRES), Limon Brigade, Popular Youth Bloc (BPJ), and

Secondary School Revolutionary Student Movement (MERS) has never been clear; if Belloso's testimony and computer records show direct links to FMLN leaders, it could have electoral ramifications in 2009. END COMMENT.  
Glazer